Grand Jury Slates Giarrusso

By CLANCY DUBOS

Former New Orleans Police Supt. Joseph I. Giarrusso has accepted an invitation he received Wednesday afternoon from U. S. Atty. Gerald Gallinghouse to appear before a federal grand jury at 10 a.m. Sept. 13.

Neither Giarrusso nor Gallinghouse would elaborate on the reasons for the former superintendent's imminent appearance, even though the call from Gallinghouse came after a second witness in the bribery trial of Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison and others mentioned Giarrusso in connection with alleged pinball payoff rackets.

"I have invited former Supt. of Police Joseph I. Giarrusso to appear before a federal grand jury at 10 a.m. on Sept. 13," Gallinghouse said Wednesday night. "He has assured me he will appear, and he will bring his records."

Gallinghouse notified Giarrusso late Wednesday afternoon—after the bribery trial had recessed for the day — when he returned an earlier call from Giarrusso.

Giarrusso insisted he did not call Gallinghouse to request a grand jury appearance, nor did he positively anticipate being invited, he said.

—Photo by The Times-Picayune.
EX-SUPT. JOE GIARRUSSO
"Absolutely no bribes."

"I had really inquired as to what my status was at the moment," Giarrusso said.

Earlier Wednesday afternoon in a press conference Giarrusso denied any connection with the pinball bribery rackets, saying he was "absolutely not" the recipient of $30,000 in bribes—nor any amount.

"I have never held a conversation with Mr. Lawrence Lagarde regarding payoffs, or tipoffs or anything else," Giarrusso said.

It was Lagarde—one of the original defendants in the current bribery trial—who testified Wednesday that he delivered bribe money to Giarrusso.

Giarrusso said Wednesday night he did not know what specific matters the grand jury would probe when he appears, but he insisted his record was clean.

"I don't care if 15 people implicate me," he said, "my position is still not changed."